

Greener Hopkinton Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2010

In attendance: Janet Ward, Jack Ruderman, Bethann McCarthy, Chris Aslin, Mary Leadbeater, Judy Fayre

Bethann, Chris and Jack updated the group on the work of the Energy Sub-Committee. Bethann filed a Letter of Intent to apply for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant last week. The full application is due February 15. Chris is working on getting an estimate of potential energy savings for the planned work at the library. Bethann is working with Neal Cass (Town Administrator) to have measurements taken of the Contoocook Fire Station to have the HVAC contractor do some heat loss calculations. New overhead doors at the highway shed and the Hopkinton fire station may also be in the grant application. The selectmen voted in additional money for an audit of the Town Hall, which will likely occur in the next couple of weeks.

The group discussed the Town's participation in the Carbon Challenge. Bethann had spoken with Garry Dow of Clean Air-Cool Planet, who suggested that a Challenge committee be formed, perhaps having representatives from Greener Hopkinton, the schools, the churches, etc. Bethann will talk to a few people to see if they would like to participate on this committee. The Challenge would likely commence in about a month or two.

Community Garden Update. Manure has been donated by Laurie Girard, who also spread the manure over the garden during the past few weeks.

Status of E-newsletter. It was agreed that it is important to maintain the e-newsletter. It has not been as chock-full of information this year. We discussed having guest writers contribute articles, which would enhance the readability of the newsletter. We will continue to use it for important announcements of speakers, meetings, etc.

Sustainable Living Speaker Series. Peter Adams, of the Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative (PAREI) will speak on Sunday, February 21 at 3:00. Janet is going to contact Ken Colburn, to see if he will give a talk in March or April. We also discussed having a local renewable energy forum, sometime in March or April. Jack suggested perhaps we could tie this in with the PAREI presentation. Bethann will email PAREI to see what they think about this logistically.

Healthy Food in Schools - Will Hastings has some good ideas in the past on how to initiate discussions on changing the cafeteria menu. (Will did not attend tonight's meeting.) We discussed how Will is going to graduate in June, and we should have a committee of dedicated people who will be able to support this long-term. Judy Wren said she is very interested in this initiative. We also discussed that it would help to get more people involved.

Agricultural Commission . The idea of an Agricultural Commission being established in Hopkinton has come up. Janet and Mary have been talking to a few different people in town about this. It was agreed that it is probably a good idea for the Town to investigate the possibility of establishing an Agricultural Commission. Mary said she will probably start to talk to a few local farmers to get an idea of their thoughts on the matter, their concerns, etc.

PAYT Update. A Pay As You Throw article will be presented Town Meeting. The town has not made any commitments on single stream versus multiple stream recycling.

New Business

PACE Bill - HB 1554. Chris explained a bill that is before the legislature that would make it possible for towns to set up funding mechanisms that allow home owners to install energy efficiency and/or renewable energy improvements in their homes without having to pay upfront. The Town would fund the investment and the homeowner would pay the town back over a matter of years. Chris feels that if this bill passes, it would be a great opportunity for Hopkinton to help residents pay for improvements.

Janet explained a conceptual plan that was discussed at the Planning Board and Economic Development last week. A company is hoping to build a large number of greenhouses to grow vegetables and plants on the Bio Energy site. They also plan to burn wood on-site to make energy. The company's representative indicated that CO2 emissions would be directed in to the greenhouse to supplement plant growth.